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PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT S. LEIKEN
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before the
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Who could have foreseen at the outset that those remote and "tiny morsels of rock and ice" would become the setting of a major international conflict--forcing the Reagan Administration to choose between its most cherished allies, throwing the Inter-American System into crisis, materially weakening NATO, raising the spectre of an arms race in South America, provoking the fall of the Argentine head of state and probably eventually of the military regime itself, and providing new opportunities for Moscow in Latin America? It was as if edging down an unlit corridor, precariously balancing a tray already overloaded with difficu and dangerous international dilemmas, suddenly a trap-door opened up and we fell straight through to the 19th century to watch and to be inexorably drawn into a conflict between Her Imperial Majesty and one of her outlying satrapies. Yet this "relic of the past" proved capable of raising fundamental questions for current U.S. foreign policy. How should we balance our relationships with Western Europe and Latin America, our commitments to NATO and to the Rio Treaty? How should we react to territorial aggression? What is the compass of the principle of self-determination? What claims do democratic and authoritarian regimes have on U.S. policy? What is the

role of U.S. allies and friends in shaping our foreign policy? How can we limit Soviet advances in the Third World? and so on. Yet the most important question of all those raised by the South Atlantic conflict is that of Third World nationalism and how the U.S. and the West should approach those problems which stem from the massive historical shift called decolonialization. This is both a moral question and a fundamental strategic question for in one way or another most of U.S. problems with the Third World and most of Soviet gains there stem from an incorrect U.S. handling of this delicate and complex issue.

That so many important questions could be raised by the conflict in the remote South Atlantic testifies to the sharpness of the contradictions in the current world situation. World peace, already marred by numerous minor and major wars currently under way, can now be endangered by conflict in the remotest of regions. This is not only because the world has become so highly interdependent economically. It is also due to the confrontation of two superpowers (global powers to a degree unknown and inconceivable even when Britain ruled the waves in the 19th century), possessing blue-water navies and world-wide interests and commitments. The new thirst for empire of one of these superpowers has turned remote corners of the globe into strategic zones and objects of contention. These remote places are generally found in the Third World--a vast region containing 85% of the world's population, itself seething

with the problems of poverty, backwardness, modernization, and decolonialization and frequently presenting rich scenarios for dispute and conflict over borders, territories, resources, ideologies and politics. "Relics of the past" and ultramodern military technology, the wish to preserve empires or to construct new ones, have rendered global peace precarious and the prospect of a Third, unprecedentedly destructive, World War the preoccupation of hundreds of millions.

The world was outraged when Argentina invaded the Malvinas. This rupture of peace and of international law, censurable in themselves, was even more disturbing in the international environment prevailing since Afghanistan. It was felt that to condone or overlook the Argentine aggression would set a dangerous precedent for the resolution of territorial disputes not only in Latin America (where they are numerous and some have been growing more dangerous in recent years), but throughout the world, especially the Third World. At a time when any outstanding territorial dispute may be capable of detonating a global conflict, the opposition to the first use of force was a natural and principled reaction.

Yet though policy must be based on principle, policy based only on principle will be ineffective, and can lead to the opposite of what was originally intended. In making policy, it is simply not enough to oppose the first use of force. One must examine the conditions which gave rise to the use of force, the circumstances which may have provoked it, and the amount and the nature of the force used. And if one supports a retaliative action,

one must be sure that that action is proportionate.

To Argentina, and to Latin America, British possession of the Malvinas rests on an original and unlawful "first use of force" 149 years ago. Most Latin American governments, and most Latin Americans, condemned the Argentinian seizure of the island. Yet they condemned it from the perspective of recognition of Argentina's claim to the islands. The Organization of American States has more than once indicated its support of Argentina's claims. For Latin Americans, the Malvinas are an anachronistic British colonial enclave, 8000 miles from England. Argentina never accepted British possession and has protested it year after year for 149 years.

Respected American experts and policymakers have recognized the legitimacy of Argentina's claims. Sumner Welles, the architect of Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, wrote that "under the accepted principles of international law [Argentina's claims] are far stronger than the British claims" (Washington Post, March 2, 1948, p. 11). Former Under Secretary of State William D. Rogers, in the midst of the crisis, urged the British to renounce their claims of sovereignty (Washington Post, May 6, 1982, p. A31).

One hundred and fifty years of British possession of the Malvinas and the legacy of a century of semi-colonial dependency on Great Britain has made the Malvinas a national cause in Argentina. If the military junta sought to manipulate this national cause for its own ends, it could only do so because it was one so deeply felt by Argentinians. The Malvinas claim

is a major pillar of Argentine national unity--learned and repeated in textbook and classroom in Argentinian schools and colleges. It is for Argentina what the Panama Canal is for Panamanians or what the Great Patriotic War is for Russians. All Argentine political tendencies (from the military through the Peronists to the radicals and socialists) rallied around the government in support of the claim to the Malvinas.

Only from this perspective is it possible to understand Latin American reaction to the crisis. With the sending of the British fleet and the sinking of the Belgrano, at the price of hundreds of Argentine lives, the conflict in the South Atlantic became pre-eminently a North-South or colonial question. The presence of the British fleet in Latin American territorial waters evoked in the Latin American memory and imagination the image of British pirates and the memory of British colonialism. Most Latin Americans did not see Great Britain as defenders of principle but as defenders of colonialism. From this perspective U.S. aid to Britain was a renunciation not only of treaty obligations under the Rio Pact but a betrayal of the spirit of American unity. Although no Latin American country defended in principle Argentina's armed (though bloodless) occupation of the islands, the dispatch of the British fleet and U.S. logistical and political support awoke Latin American solidarity above and beyond ideological differences and traditional antipathies. And the anger focused on and felt towards the United States, as a hemispheric country, as the promoter of the Monroe Doctrine, the Rio Treaty and the concept of Inter-American unity, was infinitely greater than the feelings of antagonism

toward England.

Normalcy has returned to U.S.-Latin American relations with the termination of the Falklands conflict. As in all normal periods the settled relations of trade and finance assert themselves. But the return to normalcy does not signify that the period of abnormalcy and crisis has disappeared without a trace.

It has been said that the South Atlantic crisis was like a streak of lightning exposing to view an altered landscape. Doubtless the Falklands/Malvinas crisis starkly illuminated the true relations between the United States and Latin America--the level of mutual incomprehension and distrust, the inexorably changing basis of those relations as Latin America gathers autonomy vis-a-vis the United States. But Malvinas was not only a light shed, it left a mark. This mark will not appear at the level of bi-lateral (except for Argentina) or economic relations. Its effect will be felt on the multilateral and political levels and on the level of public image and public opinion. In the constitution of U.S.-Latin American relations, looked at historically, this level, this "gut-level," may count for more than normal diplomatic and economic relations. It is the level at which Mexicans feel the loss of a great tract of their territory, or Panamanians feel the Canal issue, and Latin Americans generally the colonial question.

The Malvinas crisis will certainly further weaken the Organization of American States, already beset by a deepening dilemma created by the entry of ten Caribbean countries and the prospect of many more. But the main historical problem of the OAS has been the unequal relationship between the United

States and the rest of its members. Proposals for transferring or for disbanding and reconstituting the OAS without the United States proliferated during the conflict and came not only from those accustomed to making such proposals but also from old U.S. friends. SELA (the Latin American Economic System) has already been the beneficiary of the challenge to the OAS. SELA as a Latin American organization excludes the United States and includes Cuba.

At least nine member nations of the OAS have suggested fundamental changes in the Rio Pact(Inter-American Regional Assistance Treaty). The Rio Treaty was already largely a dead letter in the aftermath of the landing of U.S. Marines in Santo Domingo, but even this paper foundation is now crumbling. Only two South American countries participated in the annual joint naval exercises this June--five boycotted them because of the Malvinas (Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.)

The concept of collective Inter-American security has been a casualty of the crisis. You are of course aware, Mr. Chairman, that "collective security" against Soviet-Cuban subversion was the central theme in U.S. Latin American policy from the late spring of 1981 until recently. Former Secretary of State Haig made this concept the subject of a major diplomatic and political campaign in the fall of 1981 and the keynote of his speech to the OAS in St. Lucia in December. President Reagan's February 24 speech to the OAS announcing the Caribbean Basin Initiative was cast in terms of the "unity of the Americas" and our collective security.

Those appeals for collective Inter-American security encountered suspicion and distrust in many quarters of Latin America. Many considered the Administration's legitimate concern with Soviet expansionism a pretext for restoring U.S. hegemony in the region. Now such appeals ring hollow to Latin Americans who found them plausible only months ago. It may be a long time before an American administration dares to sound this theme again. Yet the Soviet challenge in Latin America has not gone away--indeed it has been strengthened by the Malvinas crisis.

If the Malvinas crisis is not a watershed in U.S.-Latin American relations, it is certainly a landmark. The landscape is indeed changing, but the Malvinas is now part of that landscape. Latin America has grown and will continue to grow more autonomous, less dependent on the United States. This is the case even in everyday economic relations where Western Europe, Japan and even the Soviet bloc now play large roles. It is even more true in the political and ideological sphere. The day is certainly past when the international relations of Latin American countries appeared "made in the USA."

There is no going back to the old Inter-American system born in the post-Second World War world. The real question in U.S.-Latin American relations is whether both sides are capable of forging a new relationship of mutual benefit. As the main beneficiary of the old system, the primary obligation will be ours. Latin Americans will read much into how the U.S. treats the Malvinas issue from here. Even if we are

not, Latin Americans are aware that the issue is not yet over. Latins grant that the U.S. has made its point that force does not pay. But they ask whether it can also prove the point that issues can be resolved through peaceful means, through negotiated settlements. If we do not use our influence to persuade Great Britain now seriously to negotiate the future of the islands, Latin Americans will conclude that the United States wishes to return to the ways of the old Inter-American System.

Over the past decade and a half U.S. influence in Latin America has declined steadily. On the morrow of the Malvinas conflict the four largest and most influential Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela) now pursue non-aligned foreign policies. The same is true of the bulk of the smaller countries.

The movement towards independence and non-alignment is a historical one in the decolonizing of "Third" world. It also has occurred and is occurring in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In those areas rising independence from the West has in many cases been accompanied by increased Soviet influence and in some by alignment with the Soviet bloc. This is not an immediate prospect for most of Latin America (though the political evolutions of Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada will not have escaped your notice), but Soviet efforts in Latin America have been augmented significantly in the past decade. There is a fork in the path of evolving Latin American independence. Whether Latin American countries will pursue genuine non-alignment or will eventually form part of a Soviet-aligned bloc will depend largely

on how the U.S. adjusts to the new Inter-American reality. Will the U.S. seek to bribe and bully Latin American countries back into the fold or will it treat them as equals in a hemisphere of sovereign independent nations?

A transitional Soviet objective in Latin America is the formation of a diplomatic bloc embracing both Latin American countries with strongly independent foriegn policies (like Brazil, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela) and countries in or near the Soviet bloc (Cuba, Grenada, and Nicaragua). Active Cuban and Nicaraguan support for Argentina largely overcame their diplomatic isolation--a necessary first step to wider goals.

While Moscow did not play an overt military role in the crisis, its press and diplomatic services kept up a steady drum-beat of support for Argentina and villification of Great Britain and, expecially, the U.S. The Soviet press presented the U.S. not only as a one-sided supporter of Great Britain but as its devious and hypocritical "neo-colonialist" partner. The crisis was another of the "ill-disguised neo-colonialist attempts by the U.S. to gain a presence in the South Atlantic" (Yuriy Kornilov, TASS political observer, TASS, April 15, 1982).

The U.S. objective was to prevent control of the strategically important islands from passing "from dependable Britain, a NATO member, to politically unstable Argentina" (Pravda, April 13, 1982, p. 5). Claiming that the West's "gunboat diplomacy" and Soviet military passiveness showed that NATO, not the Soviet Union, is "the real threat to peace the world

over" (Vitaliy Korionov, TASS, May 24, 1982), Moscow sought to utilize the Malvinas conflict in its post-Afghanistan peace offensive aimed at preventing NATO deployment of Pershing and cruise missiles. At the same time it encouraged rifts in the Inter-American System. The crisis proved beyond all doubt that the OAS and the Rio Treaty are for the U.S. only instruments "to secure [U.S.] global power in Central and South America" (Izvestia, May 4, 1982). The crisis posed to Latin Americans the question, "what does the Rio de Janeiro Pact serve for--for mutual assistance by its participants in repelling an external aggressor or for furthering the imperial claims of the U.S. and its NATO allies?" (TASS, April 20, 1982) Finally, the crisis provided Moscow with an opportunity to renew its claim, badly tarnished by the invasion of Afghanistan, to be "the natural ally" of the Third World in its anti-colonial struggle.

In Argentina, for a decade a special object of Soviet interest, the Soviets utilized the crisis to supply a hitherto missing link in its Argentina strategy: popular consent for closer relations with Moscow. The banners and slogans of the pro-Soviet Argentine Communist Party were conspicuous in rallies in Buenos Aires. The Soviet press agency and its embassy in Buenos Aires sought to present Moscow as Argentina's natural and reliable friend in its anti-colonial struggle. The Soviet World Cup soccer team touring Argentina was also pressed into service. Russian players rushed across the field to embrace Argentine goal-scorers and when Russian players were announced they received prolonged standing ovations (see annexed articles).

Moscow has sought for some time to build its burgeoning economic relationship with Argentina into a strategic-military one. It has been hawking military equipment to the Argentine generals for years. Last fall the Junta contemplated the purchase of Soviet warplanes. Inside the anti-communist Argentine officer corps are those who listened to Soviet blandishments with sympathy. Some have studied at the Leningrad military college and participated in military exchange missions with their Soviet counterparts.

Should Argentine decide to renew the South Atlantic war, supporters of Soviet military sales in the Argentine army would have strong arguments. Rather than accept Prime Minister Thatcher's plan to develop the islands under British administration, military occupation and sovereignty, Argentina would seek long range jets, anti-submarine equipment and modern naval vessels to pursue a protracted guerrilla war of a new type. Much of this equipment would have to come from the Soviet Union, unless the Argentines wish to be again at the mercy of Britain's NATO allies for spare parts and replenishment. Even if the United States decides to renew military sales to Argentina or if a Western consortium is formed for this purpose as some have suggested, Argentina will still need to purchase Soviet arms unless, of course, the Falklands/Malvinas sovereignty issue is resolved peaceably.

The greatest Soviet opportunities in the Third World have been provided by Western mishandling of the process of decolonialization. The Panama Canal Treaty removed one such target of opportunity. The Malvinas issue, while not of the magnitude

of the Panama Canal (at least not yet), is of a similar nature. It is not an issue which will affect normal bi-lateral or economic relations. But is is just the kind of issue--call it moral, psychological or historical--which goes to the root of Western-Third World relations and which provides Moscow with troubled waters in which to fish.

What lessons can be learned from the crisis? The U.S. response to the crisis--by the media, the Congress, and the Administration--demonstrated once more our profound and continuing lack of appreciation of the colonial or Third World question. The countries of the Third World are the former colonies, quasi-colonies and dependencies of the West. As colonies they were acquired by force in the two periods of Western expansion--the 16th century (Latin America), and the 19th (most of Asia and Africa). They were carved up into colonies (indigenous territorial or tribal divisions frequently ignored) and converted into raw material and food suppliers for the industrializing West. This produced some islands of progress in the Third World (though great civilizations were destroyed in the process) but largely poverty, backwardness and economic dependency. Thus, though colonialism is a "relic of the past"--as we kept hearing during the Falklands/Malvinas conflict--its legacy is a bitter and living reality for Third World peoples. In Latin America the Malvinas have become a fierce symbol of that heritage. Latin America continues to remember and to live its colonial past. The crisis should remind us that the Latin American countries consider themselves part of the Third World.

They play active and leading roles in Third World organizations, in the Non-aligned movement, in the North-South dialogue, and in the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). One lesson of the Falklands/Malvinas crisis is that Latin America is part of the Third World and colonialism and the legacy of colonialism remain central issues for the Third World.

Another lesson has to do with the U.S. propensity for brandishing high principles when intervening in the Third World. Our Vietnam adventure got a big send-off from the principle of opposing aggression, and U.S. excursions in Central America and the Caribbean usually invoke analagous good intentions. Anglo-Saxon war aims in the Falklands/Malvinas conflict were saturated with high principle: opposition to first use of force, defense of self-determination, opposition to dictatorship, support for democracy. "Amid the pressure of great events," Hegel once wrote, "a general principle gives no help." In this case, nonetheless, a general principle provided great assistance in mobilizing the British people and the U.S. media and public opinion in support of a war which is proving damaging to the West and to the viability of the very principles it professed to defend.

A lesson from the crisis is that U.S. foreign policy must learn to treat great and general principles with caution and skepticism. What has our orgy or principle wrought? Another bitter Western draught has been swallowed by Latin Americans. The British fleet, themainstay of NATO's North Atlantic defense, has been decimated. It will be rehabilitated as a colonial fleet tasked to defend not only the North Atlantic against

Moscow but also the South Atlantic against Argentina. Meanwhile people the world over wonder why two small islands merited this enormous military and political expenditure. Defending peace, the West once again looks trigger-happy.

Is the world a more peaceful place now that the Argentine "precedent" has been removed? The Argentines have been crushed but their determination to recover the Malvinas has not. The South Atlantic is now a new trouble spot in a world that hardly lacked them. The Soviets may be on their way to gaining a real foothold in the region. NATO, the barrier against Soviet aggression in Europe, has been weakened materially even if temporarilty buoyed in spirit. Events in the Middle East have undermined whatever didactic value the "lesson" administered to the Argentines was supposed to provide. A fresh use of colonial force has poured oil on the smouldering flames of Third World resentment--furnishing the Soviets with new opportunities and issues. The forces fomenting conflict and instability in the world have been strengthened, not weakened.

"A general principle gives no help." General principle (opposition to the first use of force) equates Argentina's invasion of the Malvinas with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In one case a weak country seeking to recover colonial territory; in the other a superpower seeking to colonize a weak neighbor. We accepted with zeal the British analogy between the "Argentine fascists" and "thugs" and Nazi Germany. Everyone seemed oblivious to the real threat to Europe today.

Yet even this hopelessly general and inadequate rule was not followed consistently. Russia received a (partial) boycott

of its Olympics show and a partial and short-lived grain embargo. Argentina received the British fleet.

The difference in treatment has nothing to do with general principle. "Principle," it would seem, applies only to the weak. Who could blame the Argentines or any other weak country from drawing the lesson not to foresake from the first use of force but rather to procure Soviet arms and Soviet backing for the invasion.

In the two and a half years since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the West has been jumping at shadows. The U.S. allowed itself to be bedevilled by Khomeini. We "drew the line" in El Salvador. We threatened Nicaragua. Now Argentina is punished for the sake of general principle. Meanwhile the forces actually resisting Soviet imperialism are suppressed in Afghanistan, Kampuchea and Poland.

To many in the Third World it appears that the West's main response to the present danger has been to bully the weak. It acts tough, but it is afraid. From this perspective, British and American actions in the South Atlantic did not instruct against the first use of force so much as reflect existing power relations. These relations are seen as inherited from the colonial past. Thus the British action fested on and re-asserted a world based not on principle but on power, a world where force rules.

Soviet expansionism will not be halted by high principles whose application sanctions only the weak. It will not be thwarted by punishing the Third World or by armed conflicts

between NATO and their ex-colonies. Indeed only cooperation between the Third World and the West will finally deter Moscow.

Policy Recommendations

(1) The Falklands/Malvinas

Latin Americans' conviction that behind British principle lay standard colonialism has been reinforced by Prime Minister Thatcher's announced intention to "rebuild, rehabilitate and develop" the islands, to bring in new settlers and to reject any discussion of Argentine sovereignty. Mrs. Thatcher has asked Lord Shackleton, the doyen of the Falkland Islands lobby, to update his 1976 plan for improving the islands' airport and roads and developing their mineral resources. This signifies a long-term, if not permanent, British presence on the islands and assumes U.S. security collaboration. It raises grave questions about British past objectives and even more serious ones about the future. Will the Anglo-American defense of principle culminate in a colonial enclave in Latin America? The United States should support its allies when they are the victims of aggression. We should not also support their colonial ambitions.

The United States must clearly dissociate itself from these plans and it should persuade the British to abandon them. "To transform victory into peace, the enemy must have a golden bridge across which to retreat." (Julius Caesar). That bridge must lead to Argentine sovereignty.

If Britain refuses to abandon its plans, the United States should publicly endorse the OAS resolutions on the sovereignty

question. This will give the lie to the charge that we are Great Britain's "neocolonialist partner" and help to bridge the gap between the United States and Latin America and to correct an injustice.

(2) Argentina

The United States should seek to renew its friendship with Argentina--not just with the narrow ruling group but with Argentinians from all walks of life and political currents. It should encourage a rapid transition to democratic rule. (see annexed article from New York Times)

(3) Latin America

The present moment is a difficult one but also one of challenge and opportunity. A new basis for regional cooperation will have to be found. It is not proper for the United States to take the initiative--or rather the initiative to be taken is to welcome new proposals from the Latin Americans themselves. We should encourage Latin American countries to settle outstanding border disputes rapidly and, of course, peaceably. As a surety of our good faith and as a concrete and positive contribution to development in one part of the region, we should implement the Caribbean Basin Initiative quickly and generously.

(4) Decolonialization

The May 1981 Rome Communique of the NATO foreign ministers advocated that "political settlements...be found to crisis and conflict situations." The solving of disputes between the Third World and the West is a crucial element of contemporary

Western foreign policy. A high point in this respect was reached in the Zimbabwe settlement, where Anglo-American collaboration had a profoundly different and thoroughly positive significance for the Third World. The West is morally obligated to resolve these outstanding issues. To do so with the utmost speed would be politically expedient. To fail to do so will permit the outbreak of two, three, many Falklands.

ROBERT S. LEIKEN

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Reagan Ought to Befriend Latin Americans' Nationalism

By Robert S. Leiken

WASHINGTON — To oppose growing Soviet penetration in Latin America, the United States should befriend not the "authoritarianism" of the oligarchs and generals but rather the nationalism of the people.

The Reagan Administration enlisted the Argentine junta for its crusade in Central America. Now the Argentine military is the hottest new candidate for Soviet arms while the Administration's Central American alliance policy is in disarray. A basic reappraisal by Washington is in order.

The United States' response to the Falkland Islands conflict — I prefer to call them the Malvinas — demonstrated once more our profound, persistent underestimation of third world nationalism. Meanwhile, Moscow rhetorically appealed to Latin Americans' anti-colonial sentiment, scoring propaganda and diplomatic victories throughout the region. It sought to use the conflict to forge a missing link in its Argentine strategy: popular consent for closer Soviet ties. The Soviet press, the embassy in Buenos Aires and the local Communist Party loudly backed Argentina's cause, depicting Moscow as a true friend, which, unlike Washington, did not betray Argentina in its time of need. The campaign's success was registered in the prolonged standing ovation Argentine spectators gave the Soviet Union's touring World Cup soccer team in the spring. Soviet players dashed across the field to embrace goal-scoring opponents.

Moscow's wooing of the Argentine masses began with the Malvinas crisis, but Argentine generals, gentry and exporters are all old Soviet "sweethearts." Under the junta, Argentina became Moscow's leading trade partner in the developing world. In international forums, the Soviet Union tenaciously blocks discussion of Argentine human rights violations. The junta reciprocates by tolerating the local Communist Party while savagely repressing its leftist competition. The party in turn offers "critical support" and inventive defenses for the "progressive" and "democratic" military regime.

The Soviet cover-up of the junta's human rights record has outraged Argentina's nationalistic civilian opposition. The political parties, not the anti-

They have vigorously opposed the purchase of Soviet arms, long advocated in the military. A leading Peronist, Antonio Cafiero, who is a former Minister of Economics, holds that the junta's policies create "structural dependence" on the Soviet Union, facilitating increased Soviet political influence. The junta's economics favor the oligarchy's agricultural exports and penalizes industry. More than one-third of Argentina's exports, now predominantly agricultural, are sold to the Soviet Union. The same proportion went to Britain a half century ago — before Argentina worked free of its hated colonial dependence. The nationalist opposition does not wish to substitute a new form of colonialism for the old. The Reagan Administration has little to fear and much to gain from loosening its embrace of the junta and supporting formation of a civilian government.

> The Russians have exploited each misstep by Washington

The Reagan Administration's support for authoritarianism, Argentine-style, extends to Central America. It was with the Administration's blessing that Argentine mercenaries joined Honduran troops and former Nicaraguan National Guard members in harassing the Sandinist Government. This outside intervention only strengthened pro-Soviet Sandinist leaders, who were able to co-opt Nicaraguan nationalist sentiment and attack the democratic opposition as traitors. In El Salvador, the Administration spurned negotiations with the opposition, discounting prevailing nationalist, nonaligned tendencies within both civilian and guerrilla organizations. Now the United States is aligned with rightist military officers and a resurgent oligarchy, while the Christian Democrats are being edged out of power.

tage. But their own colonialist policies reverberate across the ocean. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and especially the suppression of the Polish workers have alienated much of the Latin American left. The Mexican Communist Party has condemned these actions, and opposition to servile pro-Soviet parties has spread within the Venezuelan and Chilean left. Eden Pastora, Nicaragua's legendary Commandante Zero, has broken with Sandinist leaders, denouncing the betrayal of the revolution to the Soviet bloc. Among the Salvadoran guerrillas there is mounting mistrust of Moscow. These pressures recently obligated Cuban leaders publicly to criticize Soviet positions on Afghanistan and Poland.

The legitimate nationalism of Latin Americans who do not wish to be in the pocket of either superpower is, as in the rest of the third world, a potent force of resistance against Soviet expansionism. Nonaligned governments such as those of Venezuela and Mexico are far more effective barriers to Soviet penetration than are the Somozas, the d'Aubuissons and the Galtieris. When allowed to choose between nonalignment and Soviet influence, Latin Americans will decide against Moscow. Let them have that choice.

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(Baltimore)

MOSCOW'S ARGENTINE OPPORTUNITY

Washington.

AMERICAN backing for Argentina's "authoritarian" generals hasn't kept the Soviet wolf from the Argentine door. The Argentine people's desire for independence and democracy is a more reliable barrier to Soviet penetration.

The Russians have been diligently cultivating relations with the Argentine oligarchy and military for a decade. They may yet reap a client for Soviet arms. Much will depend on what the United States does from here.

By Robert S. Leiken

Leaving the Caribbean Basin primarily for the Cubans to ply, the Soviets have long been working South America's strategic Southern Cone with imperial indifference as to methods and ideologies.

In the early Seventies they beat the drum for reformist electoral coalitions in Chile, Uruguay and Argentina, but gave far more material aid to Peru's military junta. Last year, Soviet military sales to Peru (now under civilian government) reached a total of $1 billion in warplanes, tanks, missiles and heavy artillery. A bloody right-wing *coup* did not deter the Soviets from expanding relations with Bolivia in 1980. But the main recipient of Soviet regional attentions has been Argentina, now Moscow's leading trade partner in the developing world.

Moscow and Havana tenaciously block discussion in international forums of Argentine human rights violations. The Argentine junta reciprocates by tolerating the slavishly pro-Soviet Argentine Communist Party while savagely repressing its leftist competitors. The party in turn offers "critical support" and inventive apologias for the "progressive" and "democratic" military regimes.

The Russians have taken advantage of the Falkland Islands conflict to pursue a long-standing objective of their Argentine strategy: popular support for closer Soviet ties.

The generals, the gentry and the grain exporters are old beaux, but during the Falklands crisis the Soviets began to woo the Argentine masses. The Soviet press, its embassy in Buenos Aires and the Argentine Communist Party loudly backed the Argentine cause. They presented the Soviet Union as a true anti-colonial friend who, unlike the other superpower, will not betray Argentina in her time of need. The success of this campaign was registered in the prolonged standing ovations Argentine spectators gave the Russian World Cup soccer team touring the country during the crisis. Russian players dashed across the field to embrace Argentine goal-scorers.

As a result of its multifaceted and supra-ideological tactics, Moscow is in a position to benefit from most outcomes of the current Argentine internal crisis. The 80,000-member Communist Party, largest in South America, is more an apparatus for penetration than it is a mass party. Its sympathizers belong to powerful industrial and financial groups; its credit unions span the country. It has worked inside the state bureaucracy and military for decades. And it has the obvious advantage over the rest of the Left of having remained in Argentina throughout the junta's rule. Moreover, in some other sectors of the Left, especially among the remains of the Montonero guerrilla group, Cuban influence is strong.

Whatever the eventual complexion of the Argentine government, the Soviets will have powerful economic levers. Moscow purchases a third of all Argentine exports. It supplies turbines and generators for key power projects and is providing the critical components for Argentina's advanced nuclear program.

Even before the Falklands conflict, Moscow was applying pressure to turn this relationship into a strategic-military one. Last fall, at Moscow's urging, the junta contemplated the purchase of Soviet warplanes. A fishing agreement implemented in April now permits Soviet "scientific" vessels to operate out of the strategic Ushuaia port, off the Beagle Channel. A military sales agreement would be another step toward establishing a Soviet military presence in the western South Atlantic.

Argentina's military would be in no position to reject Soviet offers should it decide to renew the South Atlantic war. No Argentine government will accept British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's plan to develop the Falklands under British administration, military occupation and sovereignty. Instead, Argentina's military would seek long-range jets, anti-submarine equipment and modern naval vessels to pursue a protracted guerrilla war of a new kind. Some portion of this equipment would have to come from the Soviets, if the Argentines did not wish to be at the mercy of Britain's NATO allies for spare parts and replenishment.

The opposition political parties have until now opposed the military's arguments in favor of Soviet military purchases. This nationalist opposition, and not the anti-Communist military and oligarchy, comprises the center of resistance to Soviet penetration in Argentina today. Its members detest the junta's economic policy which favors the oligarchy's agricultural exports and penalizes the industrial sector. Former Peronist Economics Minister Antonio Cafiero holds that this policy has created a "structural dependence" on the Soviet Union and facilitates Soviet political penetration. In addition, Soviet vetoes of human rights discussions have deeply offended the Argentine political opposition.

The Reagan administration should learn to view with favor a rapid transition to popular, democratic rule in Argentina. It needs to understand that Argentine populist nationalism is a far more effective barrier against Soviet penetration than the anti-communism and "authoritarianism" of the oligarchy. That nationalism has been deeply offended by U.S. support for the British in the Falklands conflict.

The administration should now demand that in return for its support, the British let the Argentine prisoners go, accept U.N. administration of the Falkland Islands and negotiate their sovereignty. If not, it may have to prepare for a renewed and dramatic increase in Soviet influence in the Southern Cone.

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